



**For Immediate Release
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**STATE CELEBRATES COMPLETION OF PHASE 1 OF
CAPE COD RAIL TRAIL REHABILITATION**

Today, Massachusetts Environmental Affairs Secretary, Stephen R. Pritchard, and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner, Stephen H. Burrington, joined State Senator Robert O'Leary, State Representatives Shirley Gomes and Cleon H. Turner, the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce President Dan Wolf and MassBike Cape and Islands Chapter President Robert Miceli, along with representatives from local municipalities and businesses, to celebrate completion of Phase 1 of the Cape Cod Rail Trail Rehabilitation Project with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and seven-mile bike tour of the newly-completed improvements.

Phase 1 of the project, managed by DCR, includes reconstruction of the 10-mile section of the rail trail running from the western trailhead in Dennis to Millstone Road in Brewster. Rail trail improvements include:

- a new, wider asphalt surface, with a root barrier designed to deflect tree roots away from the surface.
- a 5-foot shoulder for equestrian and hiking use was also added, where feasible
- new amenities and an improved rest stop at the bicycle rotary in Harwich
- expansion of two trail parking lots in Dennis and Brewster
- installation of new granite mile markers and trail signage.

Additionally, innovative safety features were installed at 15 trail-roadway intersections. The intersections were realigned with slight curves to slow approaching cyclists, to shorten the distance needed to cross, and to make for better visibility for motorists and trail users.

Textured brick divisional islands were also built, to guide cyclists away from the bollard posts at each intersection, as well as to provide a visual cue that there is a roadway ahead. This unique, innovative intersection treatment is being implemented for the first time and is expected to serve as a new model for rail trail safety.

It's estimated that more than 400,000 bicyclists, walkers, and skaters annually use the rail trail, which passes by a number of rivers, ponds, forests, salt marshes and cranberry bogs running 22-miles from Dennis to Wellfleet.

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“As part of the Romney Administration’s Fix-it-First Initiative, the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs is proud to be a partner in the rehabilitation of the Cape Cod Rail Trail,” said EOEA Secretary Stephen R. Pritchard. “These major improvements are helping to make one of the oldest and most popular rail trails in the country one of the safest and most enjoyable.”

“The rail trail offers a scenic, peaceful, off-road place for exercise and recreation,” said DCR Commissioner Stephen H. Burrington. “It also offers a great opportunity for local businesses. Since it first opened in 1979, more than 30 businesses have sprung up along the trail to provide bike rentals, repairs, refreshments and other services to trail users.”

The project was funded by \$6 million in state funding and \$1.2 million in federal Public Lands Highways funds from the Federal Highway Administration, secured by the Massachusetts Highway Department and the Massachusetts Congressional delegation.

“I am pleased to have played a role in helping secure the federal funding for this project,” Congressman William D. Delahunt said. “The widespread support and enjoyment for this bike path has been critical for Senator Kennedy and I as we work together to secure federal funding to expand the network of bike paths all around Cape Cod.”

Representative Gomes, who was honored today said, “This is one of our oldest and most heavily used bike trails, and these renovations will only make it more popular.”

On the occasion of her retirement from the Massachusetts General Court, EOEA and DCR presented State Representative Shirley Gomes with a Certificate of Appreciation for her tireless advocacy for improving the Cape Cod Rail Trail.

“The rail trail continues to be a very popular recreational destination for both residents and visitors. It is encouraging to see a commitment to keeping this regional asset maintained,” said Representative Turner.

“As someone who regularly uses the bike trails, this is a wonderful event, said O’Leary. “I personally know how important these trails are to the Cape. We need to expand this network from Bourne to Provincetown.”

Phase 2 of the project encompasses the remaining 12 miles of trail, from Brewster to the eastern trailhead at LeCount Hollow Road in Wellfleet. Much of the work will be similar to that from Phase 1; however, Phase 2 will also include marsh restoration work at Namskaket Creek in Brewster and Orleans, improvements to the Wellfleet parking lot, and a realignment of the Route 6 tunnel in Eastham to improve safety for bicyclists.

Phase 2 construction will begin in mid-September 2006 and is scheduled to be completed in mid-June 2007. During the rehabilitation, that section of the rail trail under construction will be closed, but the newly reconstructed section will be open.

The Cape Cod Rail Trail, one of the oldest of its kind, was opened in 1979, built on an Old Colony Railroad right-of-way purchased by the Commonwealth in 1976. The trail was extended in 1994, and approximately nine miles of a municipal extension of the trail to Chatham was recently completed.

Photos will be available by request

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